



2003

The Field

Charlene Gan

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Martini, Clem. *The Field*. Playwrights Canada Press, 2001. ISBN 088754648X. Contact publisher regarding price. 35 pp.

Reviewer: Charlene Gan

Reading Level: All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Plays; Contemporary realistic plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Race--Juvenile drama; Handicaps--Juvenile drama; Friendship--Juvenile drama;

Theme: You can't judge a book by its cover.

Production Requirements: Simple set, a dog (a puppet will do), modern costumes.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 25 Min

Characters: 1 F, 2 M, 1 canine

Cast: One girl about 9, two boys (one 9 and one 12) and a dog (can be a puppet).

Time Period: Present

Lane, a blind girl, has just moved into a new neighborhood in the summer. She spends most of her time in the field not too far from her home, exploring her new world and playing. Arun, a boy who has just come back from camp, meets Lane in the field and they strike up a conversation. Lane's older brother Ben comes to get her for dinner, but when he sees Arun, he is disturbed and won't tell Lane why until Arun has left. Ben tells Lane that she can't play with Arun because Arun is from India. Lane's father is against foreigners and so she decides to tell this to Arun. When school starts, he doesn't talk to Lane, and she feels that everyone hates her because of what her parents believe. One afternoon, Ben and Lane are playing in a field when Arun comes by. Ben and Lane continue to play until Ben falls into an old abandoned well. Fortunately, Arun helps Lane get Ben out of the well just in time before it collapses. Lane decides that her father can sometimes be wrong and that Arun is really a pretty cool kid, and she and Ben take Arun home to meet their father.

The action of the play is very well paced. Each scene blends nicely with the last and the audience is able to easily understand what is going on. The language shows the passage of time, such as when Lane and Ben play in the field the second time and discuss how school is going, so the audience knows that summer has ended and school is now in session. The action is kept up by the intensity of the words or by the actions of the actors. When characters are just talking and getting to know each other, they play with the dog and explain about themselves. When there is the confrontation between Arun and Lane about Arun being Indian, the audience is able to hear the strong use of words and the misunderstandings that children have about things like race. Ben is a fairly static character, but both Lane and Arun show progress in understanding more about their differences. For example: Arun throws a piece of gum to Lane and it falls beside her. She asks Arun where the gum is and he jokingly says, "Are you blind?" He realizes that she *is* blind and that simply because she can do things on her own doesn't mean she isn't handicapped. Lane realizes that people are people, each person is unique, and that not everyone, like her father, appreciates it. These realizations come mostly when they are faced with a large trial, like the time Ben falls into the well. This makes the children work together to save him and helps them become friends again.